

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for managing a store implemented on an Internet, the method implemented on a computerized self-service platform and comprising:
  - storing information concerning products offered for sale through the store in a product database;
  - storing information concerning a presentation of the store to customers in an ecommerce storefront; and
  - assisting a user to manage the product database.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the self-service platform is accessible by the user through a web URL.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of storing information concerning a presentation of the store comprises:
  - storing web pages for a storefront of the store in the ecommerce storefront.
4. The method of claim 3 wherein at least one web page includes a store tag, the store tag referencing information stored in the product database.
5. The method of claim 4 wherein resolving the store tag does not require resolving a query.
6. The method of claim 4 further comprising:
  - providing at least one template for a web page that includes a store tag.
7. The method of claim 4 further comprising:
  - providing a wizard to assist the user in using store tags.
8. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of storing information concerning products offered for sale comprises:

- storing said information in at least one table, each table organized into items with at least one item having at least one option.
9. The method of claim 8 wherein inventory can be managed for each option.
  10. The method of claim 8 wherein each table contains records, each record corresponds to one item, and options for an item are encoded as a single field within a record for the item.
  11. The method of claim 8 further comprising:  
displaying items in a table format, wherein options within an item can be collapsed and expanded within the display.
  12. The method of claim 8 wherein the step of assisting a user to manage the product database comprises:  
assisting the user to define a new table by providing a form with predefined mandatory fields that must be included in the new table, providing a form with predefined store fields that optionally can be included in the new table, and providing a form with predefined shopping fields that optionally can be included in the new table.
  13. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of assisting a user to manage the product database comprises:  
assisting the user to define groups within the product database, wherein the user can manipulate the product database by manipulating the groups.
  14. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of storing information concerning products offered for sale through the store in a product database comprises:  
storing catalog-related information in a product catalog; and  
storing inventory-related information in inventory records.
  15. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of assisting a user to manage the product database comprises:

assisting a user to define a regular price for a product and optionally also a sales price for the product.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein the step of assisting a user to manage the product database further comprises:

activating all sales prices within a selected group of products upon a single action by the user.

17. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of assisting a user to manage the product database comprises:

applying a user-defined discount to all prices within a selected group of products upon a single action by the user.

18. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of assisting a user to manage the product database comprises:

permitting the user to edit the product database only by submitting predefined forms or by importing data.

19. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of assisting a user to manage the product database comprises:

before completing a task that will lose data from the product database, warning the user that data will be lost and verifying that the user still desires to complete the task.

20. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of assisting a user to manage the product database comprises:

uploading data identified by the user;  
verifying that the user desires to commit the uploaded data; and  
upon verification, committing the uploaded data.

21. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of assisting a user to manage the product database comprises:
- publishing a catalog based on the information stored in the product database; and
  - exporting the published catalog.
22. The method of claim 21 further comprising:
- importing pages created based on the exported catalog; and
  - storing the imported pages in the ecommerce storefront.
23. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
- updating the store in real-time as the user publishes edits to the product database.
24. A system for managing a store implemented on an Internet, comprising:
- a product database storing information concerning products offered for sale through the store;
  - an ecommerce storefront storing information concerning a presentation of the store to customers, said information referencing information stored in the product database; and
  - a product administration module coupled to the product database and accessible by a user for managing the product database on a self-serve basis.
25. The system of claim 24 wherein the product administration module is accessible by the user through a web URL.
26. The system of claim 24 wherein the ecommerce storefront stores web pages for a storefront of the store.
27. The system of claim 26 wherein at least one web page includes a store tag, the store tag referencing information stored in the product database.

28. The system of claim 27 wherein the product administration module comprises:  
a store tag hub to assist the user in using store tags.
29. The system of claim 27 further comprising:  
an ecommerce server coupled to the ecommerce storefront for serving web pages to  
customers, the ecommerce server including a store tag server for resolving store  
tags included in the web pages.
30. The system of claim 24 wherein the product database stores information concerning  
products offered for sale in at least one table, each table organized into items with at least one  
item having at least one option.
31. The system of claim 30 wherein inventory can be managed for each option.
32. The system of claim 30 wherein the product administration module comprises:  
a table management module for managing the tables; and  
an item management module for managing the items.
33. The system of claim 24 wherein the product database comprises:  
a product catalog for storing catalog-related information; and  
inventory records for storing inventory-related information.
34. The system of claim 33 wherein the product administration module comprises:  
an inventory management module for managing the inventory records.
35. The system of claim 24 wherein the product administration module comprises:  
a publication module for publishing a catalog based on the information stored in the  
product database.
36. The system of claim 24 wherein the product administration module updates the store in  
real-time as the user publishes edits to the product database.

37. A method for managing a store implemented on a communications network, the method implemented on a self-service platform and comprising:

storing information concerning products offered for sale through the store in a product database;

storing information concerning a presentation of the store to customers in an ecommerce storefront; and

assisting a user to manage the product database.

38. The method of claim 37 wherein at least some of the information stored in the ecommerce storefront references information stored in the product database.

39. The method of claim 37 wherein the step of storing information concerning products offered for sale comprises:

storing said information as items, with at least one item having at least one option, wherein inventory can be managed for each option.

40. The method of claim 37 wherein the step of assisting a user to manage the product database comprises:

assisting the user to define groups within the product database, wherein the user can manipulate the product database by manipulating the groups.